2537 Regent St., Apt. 202
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Match 21, 1968

Mr. Tom Bethell
638 Royal Street
N.O., La. 70130

Dear Tom,

Thank you for your letters of March 6 and 13. I am enclosing a memo on various copies of the Corliss Lamont pamphlet. I am still working on the 544 Camp St. literature angle, and will pass on any conclusions to you; in the meantime, I will try to answer the specific questions in your letters.

As the enclosed memo shows, at least 2 of the 4 Lamont pamphlets obtained from Oswald by the N.O.P.D. after his arrest had the Camp. St. address. I know nothing more than you do about the chain of possession of the copy in the Intelligence Division file. I have no reason to believe that Martello ever saw that copy, since he was not with the Intelligence Division at that time (10H53). CE 3120 is a copy of the pamphlet which Martello said he obtained from Oswald, but I cannot tell whether this means directly from Oswald or from the evidence that Martello noticed on the morning of the 10th. The latter possibility seems to fit better with Martello's rather confusing accounts.

As far as I know, none of the "Hands off Cuba" handbills or any other of Oswald's literature had the Camp St. address.

I do not know how to interpret Mrs. Garner's statement (10H269) to the effect that Quiroga had a stack of pamphlets with him when he visited Oswald. Obviously, there are lots of things I would like to know about Quiroga.

Your letter mentioned that the Secret Service steered clear of Banister in their investigation of the 544 Camp St. matter. I had not noticed previously that on December 2, 1963, SA Gerrets went to 2 union offices at 544 Camp (at least one of which was on the second floor) and found nobody who had seen Oswald, but apparently did not inquire at Banister's office. I am willing to believe that this omission was innocent. (Perhaps Gerrets did not know who Banister was, and perhaps Banister was smart enough to close his office while the investigation was in progress.) I am not very suspicious of the Secret Service investigation of this matter; I feel that if the SS had not happened to get to Martello before the FBI did, we might never have found out about the 544 Camp St. literature at all.

There is no doubt, however, that pp. 680-683 of CD 75 cannot be called an investigation by the FBI. Weisberg has pointed out that pages 682-3 raise the question of why Wall was interested in Arcacha and Banister (Oswald in N.O., pp. 330 +). It seems most probable that the FBI first interviewed Newman (pp. 680-1) and that the Bartes and Banister reports constitute a "followup investigation." It also appears that the purpose of the Newman interview was to find out if Oswald had rented an office for the FPCC at 544 Camp; it is most reasonable to assume that it was prompted by FBI knowledge of the Lamont pamphlet - perhaps through the N.O.P.D. or the SS, and perhaps from a copy in the FBI files. One strange thing is that neither in the Newman interview nor in any other document I recall seeing does the FBI say that Oswald was distributing literature with the 544 Camp St. address. I do not know of any other FBI documentation of this "investigation," but I have not searched for it.

I have absolutely no positive evidence that the FBI noticed or understood the significance of the 544 Camp St. business before the assassination. That is purely speculation on my part, based largely on the assumption that what Garrison says about Oswald's activities and Government connections is true. I think that many aspects of the FBI's reports on Oswald before the assassination are suspicious. For one thing, although the FBI asked Oswald where the N.O. FPCC met (4H435), checked out PO Box 30016, and made attempts to locate Hidell (CE 833, #17), there is no indication that the 544 Camp address was checked. It is possible that the copies of the Lamont pamphlet which Quigley saw did not have that address, or that he didn't notice it (nobody in the N.O.P.D. noticed it either, as far as I know), but I find this a bit unlikely.

I expect that you see the possible importance of obtaining the copy of the pamphlet which Oswald "made available" to Quigley (17H761) and which Quigley may or may not have kept. Since at least some of the pamphlets had the 544 Camp St. address, why did Oswald tell Quigley that the FPCC had no office in N.O. (17H759)? Did he perhaps hold on to a copy with no address to show Quigley?

There is probably quite a bit of relevant material in the Archives on the whole 544 Camp matter, in addition to the appendix to Weisberg's book and the material I have obtained recently, but I have not done the sort of research that is necessary. I expect that there are many negative clues (i.e. omissions in FBI reports), and it is essentially impossible to do that kind of research without being in Washington.

Concerning the origin of the pamphlets: in V.T. Lee Exhibit 1, Oswald wrote, "I now ask for 40 or 50 more of the fine, basic pamphlets-14," i.e., the Lamont pamphlet "The Crime Against Cuba." It is indicated that 50 copies were sent on 4/19/63.

In his next letter (Lee Exhibit 2) Oswald pointed out that "in the past I have received from you pamphlets etc., both bought by me and given to me by you." My guess is that the leaflets (perhaps including the Lamont pamphlet) which Oswald apparently distributed in Dallas were purchased by mail, perhaps using an ad in the Militant or the Worker, and that the national FPCC office did not keep a record of this transaction. It is noted that Oswald had quite a selection of FPCC material in his possession at the time of the assassination (9H419-421).

Have you checked out the apparent distribution of FPCC literature on the Tulane campus (CE 2548, CE 3029)? The FBI and the Commission do not seem to have been too interested. The Tulane campus police might have some records on this.

Sincerely yours,

Paul L. Hoch

Paul L. Hoch

cc-H. Weisberg